

**Town of Vernon
Hockanum River Linear Park Committee
Minutes – January 25, 2019**

Present: Members: George Arthur, Ginny Gingras, Ann Letendre
Absent: Joe King
Staff: Marty Sittler; Guest: Don Bellingham

(HRLP meeting called to order at 11:00 am, following the Friends HRLP meeting at 9:30 am.)

1. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of previous meeting of 3/23/18 were approved, motion by George, second by Ginny. (Remaining 2018 meetings were cancelled).

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2. Old Business

A. Hockanum River Trail Reports

Refer to Arthur report and Vernon Greenway Volunteers report (attached) for details.

B. Review of needs – Hockanum River Parks and Parking Areas

- a. Dart Hill South to Lyman Bridge – Don and George report that soil has eroded away from the asphalt section of trail at Hockanum Mansions. Marty will have repaired.
- b. Dart Hill North to WPCA - George reported that the retaining wall in a section behind Sherwood Arms needs some repair. George will attend to it.
- c. Walgreen Corner OK, someone is taking care of the area
- d. Saxony Mill Park OK.
- e. Paper Mill Corner Park – OK
- f. West Main St - OK
- g. Tankerhoosen Dam (Phoenix St) - OK
- h. Rails to Trails – Rockville Spur - OK

George proposed that use of bikes be restricted in areas of the HR trail that are prone to being wet and therefore subject to erosion. Ann will get "no bike" signs priced at Sign Connection.

C. Current Projects – Status

A. Report from Friends HRLP on Grant for Bridge and Boardwalk

1. Suspended Bridge – Remaining tasks:

- a. Landscaping: Completed by Earthworks
- b. Crosswalk and road signs: Completed by Vernon Public Works
- c. Signs: Ann received quote from Sign Connection for \$1162 for metal historical sign. Recognition sign also has to be drafted and installed. Naming of the bridge was discussed.
- d. Video: Completed – Video is available on Town website home page.
- e. Ribbon Cutting – Was held Trails Day, Sunday, June 3rd, and attended by about 25 people. Mayor Dan Champagne and Ellington First Selectman Lori Spielman did the honors
- f. Future Management – Don said the VGV could take on the site. He will update maps.

2. Pleasantview Boardwalks – Status

190 feet of at-grade boardwalk has been installed by ORC over the muddy sections. Additional at-grade boardwalk is needed for about another 190 feet. A wetlands permit is in progress by Town staff. There is insufficient funding remaining in the grant to cover the cost. Ann has asked the Mayor if the Town of Vernon would share the cost.

Remaining work: Plantings, signage will be completed this spring, including the Pannier interpretive sign and the recognition sign. Ann will get quote from Sign Connection.

3. Property Easements - Pleasantview to Manchester line: DOT permit was received to clear the Town's sewer easement for trail access to the DOT property between I-84 and Kelly Rd. This trail section will require significant additional funding due to structures needed. Grant funding will be sought. Funds earmarked for easements for this section will be used to cover some of the additional at-grade boardwalk.

4. Costs – Ann distributed spreadsheet of costs to date and estimate to complete.
Total grant award: \$175,000; remaining funds: \$11,950.
Matching requirements: \$43,750; remaining needed \$860.

5. Contract – A contract extension to September 8, 2019 has been executed with DEEP.

D. Report from Friends HRLP on Trail Census: Don reported that the preliminary numbers have been released to participants only for the recent year. John Horan has been working with Don on the project. The prelim data places Vernon second in total numbers of users, up from third place last year. Fifteen trails in the state participate in the census. A press release will be drafted when final results are released.

E. Potential Projects and New Grant Applications

19 Grove Street – Ann reported that the Town of Vernon has received an approx \$700K grant to connect the end of the Rockville spur at Vernon Ave with the 19 Grove Street area, via Rockville streets. Thereafter, it will connect with Tolland trails at Shenipsit Lake. Most of the funds will be for road and street work for a safe urban walking trail. Our role is expected to be to provide input for the 19 Grove Street area, which will be improved as a park, and in trail location planning and installation from 19 Grove through properties to Route 74.

F. River Protection: Actions, Public Education – no activity

3. New Business - Hockanum River Master Plan – Trail Needs Assessment

George drafted a detailed needs assessment of the five trail segments of the Master Plan. The main remaining incomplete section is in Segment One, near I-84 and the commercial properties. Circumventing the DOT property and structures is a major problem. George and Marty will meet with Town Engineer Dave Smith to evaluate possible solutions.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 am, motion by George, second by Ginny.

Respectfully submitted,
Ann Letendre, Chairman

**ARTHUR REPORT
March 23, 2018 to January 25, 2019**

The Hockanum River trail path has been made from the area behind Wendys to the Manchester side of the I-84 underpass. The plan is to continue where possible on the Vernon 20-ft wide sewer easement to Manchester. I call these paths instead of a trail because:

1. There is currently no direct connection to the existing trail at either end of the path.
2. There is not land owner permission to be on some of the sections.
3. There are needs for structures to make the path usable by hikers.
4. The path had been flagged with orange tape but there are no orange blazes.

I have prepared a detailed status report for the entire Vernon Hockanum River Linear Park. The existing Master Plan as updated by me in April 2009 is used as reference. The Master Plan was produced in GIS format by the Town and

incorporates GIS shapefiles. Therefore there is accurate mapping and supporting data tables. The Master Plan has five Trail Segments:

Segment One, Manchester line to Dart Hill Road. Manchester to Wendy HRLP is contained in Segment One. There are 32 pages of data, photos and maps in the Segment One details about the Manchester to Wendy paths.

Segment Two, Dart Hill Rd to Rt 74 is considered complete except for two minor GIS changes. There are 4 pages, 3 are maps.

Segment Three, Ellington Marsh now contains much more data and mapping. I have included what I know. Ellington should be contacted for detail. There are 5 pages, 4 are maps.

Segment Four, Rockville is partially complete, but much is still in the planning stage. There are 3 pages, 2 are maps. A "hiker" would have trouble following this.

Segment Five, Manchester to Dart Hill Rd is complicated and I have not finished with it. Talcottville and the Tankerhoosen River trails are included. The Rails-to-Trails are included with connections to all other segments as well as to Valley Falls Park and therefore the CFPA Shenipsit Trail. A "hiker" would have trouble following some of this.

I have included these details because I will not be able to complete these trail segments. I no longer have the time, health and physical capability to do so. I have dedicated 10,000 hours to trail work since retirement. I have developed some health problems and should not do work in the woods by myself, and the remaining trail work will require work parties. I do not know how much time I can dedicate to GIS.

Vernon Greenways Volunteers Report by Don Bellingham March 23, 2018 to January 25, 2019

Two new projects were completed in this time period.

1. Installation of a bike repair station at Church Street was researched, priced and submitted to Parks and Rec for consideration. Marty agreed it was a good idea. Parks and Rec purchased and installed the unit.
2. Hop River Ride Rolling Museum was initiated in Bolton in 2017. It was a bike tour of the Bolton Hop River Trail conducted by bike groups in Bolton. They asked us to join them in 2018. We did so. Our kickoff was at noon at Pedal Power with a speaker at the mural and a second at the Vernon Depot. A detailed description was posted on a large sig over Tunnel Road and various overlook places were noted, as well. Timing was planned so participants would arrive for the Bolton kickoff at 2 PM.

Ongoing accomplishments are listed below:

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|----------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| • Trail Census – April, July, September, October | (10 Total Outings) |
| • Spring Kickoff Meeting at Camp Newhoca – April | (45+ Attended) |
| • Mulch and Cleanup 8 Plantings – April, May, June | (7 Total Outings) |
| • Weed Whacking Team – June, July, August | (8 Total Outings) |
| • Trail Maintenance Team – June, July, August, Sep | (13 Total Outings) |
| • Mural Maintenance – April | (2 total Outings) |
| • Fall Rewards Dinner at Camp Newhoca – October | (34 Attendees) |

Publicity:

1. Front Page picture in JI of Cleanup on Warren Avenue Planting.
2. Interview and pictures on bike repair installation in the Courant Local News.

Financial: Donations \$3,863 Outlay \$3,282